

City of Adelaide Commonwealth Home Support Program and Positive Ageing Program

Strategic Alignment - Our Community

Public

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City Community Services and Culture Committee

Program Contact:

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Approving Officer:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council is committed to playing an ongoing and important role in supporting older people to age positively in the City community, and to expanding this role beyond in-home services.

This report comes at a time of substantial Commonwealth Government reform, with the new Aged Care Act commencing on 1 July 2025, and the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) transitioning to a Support at Home program on 1 July 2027. This will significantly impact the City of Adelaide's (CoA) CHSP service provision. As the format of CHSP services changes we are required to respond. Considering this, there is a timely opportunity for CoA to direct resources dedicated to older city residents, towards a broader social wellbeing program.

This report proposes a transition to a new Positive Ageing (WOW Adelaide) program, and that CoA relinquish CHSP service delivery, and carefully support the transition of all 132 active CoA CHSP clients to alternative city based CHSP providers.

The proposed new Positive Ageing program would deliver on the Strategic Plan 2024-2028 outcome '*an inclusive, equitable and welcoming community where people feel a sense of belonging*'. Informed by market research from the Council of the Ageing SA's (COTA SA) 'The Plug-In', this new program titled – *WOW - Wellness. Opportunities. Wellbeing.* will focus on promoting social connections for older City residents, under four themes: special interests, lifelong learning, emotional wellbeing and physical activity.

This proposal will enable Council to add greater value to more City residents and move away from competing with and replicating in-home services already offered by other providers. It presents an opportunity to expand the offerings available to older city residents and increase those that can access the offerings, without impacting residents' accessibility to services provided, that will remain available through alternative providers. Council remains committed to supporting older people, and those assisting them, to better understand and navigate the complex aged care system. Through the continuation of the CoA Healthy Ageing Coordinator role, as part of this new proposal, Council will provide an ongoing information and referral service for all older City residents, to ensure inclusion and continuity of care for the older population.

The current delivery model for CHSP requires a substantial financial contribution from Council, to complement the Federal Government grant. Through the new proposed program, Council will be enabled to deliver a holistic social and wellbeing program, which better meets the needs of older residents in the community, for a nominal financial investment.

This new program intersects with Strategic Plan 2024-2028 targets such as delivery of the Active City Strategy, City Plan, Community Wellbeing Plan, and the council resolution to deliver a Community Development Strategy and Implementation Plan by the end of this term.

A report recommending CoA cease CHSP service provision and develop a broader Program Ageing program was presented to Council in March 2024. At that time, Council asked for a further report in the 2024/25 Financial Year, seeking more information about the transition process and the detail of the proposed new Positive Ageing program. If this proposal is endorsed, the Administration will work with stakeholders, residents and the Federal Government on a comprehensive plan, to transition out of CHSP service delivery by 1 July 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendation will be presented to Council on 11 February 2025 for consideration

THAT THE CITY COMMUNITY SERVICES AND CULTURE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL THAT COUNCIL

1. Acknowledges the City of Adelaide's ongoing commitment to supporting positive ageing in our community.
 2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer or delegate to advise the Federal Government funding body that Council will commence the transition out of delivery of Commonwealth Home Support Program services in 2025, with services facilitated through the City of Adelaide ceasing on 30 June 2025.
 3. Notes that Commonwealth Home Support Program services currently delivered to City of Adelaide residents, will remain accessible for eligible residents through alternative providers and that Administration will work with current clients and the Department of Health and Aged Care, to ensure a smooth transition to a new provider.
 4. Notes:
 - 4.1. The Commonwealth Home Support Program Analysis and Future Direction Discussion Paper contained in Attachment A to Item 7.1 on the Agenda for the meeting of City Community Services and Culture Committee held on 4 February 2025.
 - 4.2. The Plug-in Social Program Co-Design Consumer Insights Report contained in Attachment B to Item 7.1 on the Agenda for the meeting of City Community Services and Culture Committee held on 4 February 2025.
 - 4.3. The WOW Wellness. Opportunities. Wisdom Initial Brand Concept Design contained in Attachment C to Item 7.1 on the Agenda for the meeting of City Community Services and Culture Committee held on 4 February 2025.
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IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2024-2028 Strategic Plan	Strategic Alignment – Our Community A new Positive Ageing program for the City of Adelaide would deliver on the outcome ‘an inclusive, equitable and welcoming community where people feel a sense of belonging’ and intersects with targets such as delivery of the Active City Strategy, City Plan and Community Wellbeing Plan.
Policy	Not as a result of this report
Consultation	In 2023, Council partnered with the Council of the Ageing SA’s social enterprise ‘The Plug-In’ to research to assist our understanding of the experience of ageing well for city residents aged over 50, and to learn how to maximise the value of existing Council programs. The research included focus groups with CoA older city residents.
Resource	Not as a result of this report
Risk / Legal / Legislative	Council must give at least five months’ notice to transition out of delivering the Commonwealth Home Support Program.
Opportunities	To ensure service provision is aligned with what the community seeks and allows for greater impact for all ageing City residents, not only the small cohort who qualify for Federal support and choose CoA as their CHSP service provider.
24/25 Budget Allocation	Income \$300,054 Federal Government Grant Funding Received \$36,800 Client Co-contributions Received Expense \$197,963 1.8 FTE \$236,100 Service Delivery \$26,000 Market Bus \$20,840 Program Overheads \$14,350 Healthy Ageing Program Budget (Non CHSP) Due to substantial cost increases since 2023, driven by changes to the Awards structure within the aged care sector (led by the Fair Work Commission), a budget shortfall is anticipated for the 2024/25 financial year, but this also means that we may not deliver the full quota of service outputs as per our grant agreement with the Federal Government.
Proposed 25/26 Budget Allocation	Required funding for a new CoA Positive Ageing (WOW Adelaide) program will be considered as part of the 2025/26 business plan and budget process.
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	Not as a result of this report
24/25 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)	Not as a result of this report
Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)	Not as a result of this report
Other Funding Sources	\$300,054 Federal Grant Funding

DISCUSSION

Background

1. Through the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP), which is administered in the City of Adelaide (CoA) by the Community Wellbeing team, Council currently supports approximately 132 residents (or 0.5% of the City's population) to remain independent in their homes, by providing an intermediary service for domestic assistance, home maintenance and modifications, transport to medical appointments and assisted shopping, and some group socialising opportunities. Approximately 72 of these clients (or 0.3% of population) receive regular (generally fortnightly) recurring services.
2. Council receives service referrals as a CHSP provider and outsources these to an aged care service agency.
3. In 2021, the Federal Government announced a reform of the Aged Care sector, including replacing the current CHSP and Home Care Package services with a new Support at Home Program, with roll out commencing in July 2025.
4. In December 2023, the Federal Government announced that although some Support at Home Packages remain on track to commence in 2025, CHSP will transition to Support at Home no earlier than July 2027.
5. A report at [Link 1](#) was presented at Council's March 2024 meeting with a recommendation to transition out of CHSP service provision, implementing a new Positive Ageing Program, from July 2024. At that time, details of the proposed Positive Ageing Program were not fully formed, and Council resolved that the proposal be explored through a further report in the 2024/25 Financial Year.
6. The CoA Strategic Plan 2024-2028 does not directly specify a need for in-home services for older people, however the 'Our Community' strategic aspiration clearly identifies several actions aligned with the delivery of broader and more inclusive social programs for older City residents. They are as follows:
 - 6.1. Enable community led services which increase wellbeing, social connections and participation in active lifestyles, leisure, recreation and sport.
 - 6.2. Lead and create opportunities for people to expand knowledge and master new skills.
 - 6.3. Support belonging through an inclusive and welcoming community that recognises diversity and enables people of all abilities living, working and visiting the City.
 - 6.4. Create sustained, respectful and inclusive opportunities that encourage full participation of people from diverse backgrounds in the cultural and social life of the City by ensuring our services and projects are accessible and inclusive for all.
7. Local Government Organisations have received Commonwealth and State Government funding for more than 35 years to deliver in-home services, formerly known as Home Assist and Home and Community Care (HACC) funding. Since the inception of My Aged Care and CHSP in 2015, the service model has changed substantially to be more competitive and commercially driven.
8. A CEO Briefing was held on 28 January 2025 to provide Council with an overview of the information and recommendations presented in this report. A CHSP Analysis and Future Direction Discussion Paper has also been developed, which provides further background on the considerations of this report (**Attachment A**).

The CoA CHSP service – history and opportunities

9. Over the past several years, many changes have influenced the operations of the CoA CHSP program. A discussion paper (**Attachment A**) has been prepared, which documents:
 - 9.1. the history of service provision and details of the sector reform
 - 9.2. how residents and clients engage with the system
 - 9.3. the operational details of the CoA CHSP, relevant to the recommendations of this report.
 - 9.4. limited analysis of other South Australian Councils' approaches to Healthy Ageing and CHSP and opportunities and risks associated with this proposed transition
 - 9.5. examples of client scenarios and potential impacts of this service change
 - 9.6. a summary of findings from the COTA SA research undertaken with older CoA residents in 2023 and 2024.
10. Much of this detail was presented to Council in the March 2024 report, however, has been updated to reflect the current state of play in the sector, the financial status of the program in the 2024/25 financial year, and the COTA SA co-design research to inform the new Positive Ageing program proposal.

11. Whilst this report presents a recommendation to cease the CHSP service, the CoA Healthy Ageing Coordinator will remain available to provide community information and referral services. Residents will be encouraged to continue to approach Council with inquiries related to navigating aged care services and the complex aged care system, as well as advice they may be seeking regarding advocacy. Council will continue to link and refer community members to organisations such as: OPAN (Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN), Aged Rights Advocacy Service (ARAS), and My Aged Care. Council can schedule regular My Aged Care pop-up booths in community centres and libraries, supported by a My Aged Care representative.
12. The City of Mitcham, who have now exited from the CHSP, resolved to retain a Community Connector role (Community Information and Referral service), for this purpose. Early feedback suggests this role is playing an important and impartial part in supporting diverse community members to seek out the right services. City of Mitcham have also retained their community bus service and established a Positive Ageing and Inclusion role.
13. As CHSP is integrated into the Support at Home Model, with a more consumer directed service model of care and an open marketplace funded by fee for service delivered in arrears, it is anticipated that Councils will struggle to operate effectively, particularly Councils like CoA where the service is small in scale.
14. Along with all the major providers of aged care services, there are 64 registered CHSP providers servicing the City and North Adelaide (13 City-based) that receive funding to provide the same or similar CHSP services that the CoA currently provides to City residents. Should CoA withdraw from the CHSP program, this will not impact clients' eligibility to receive funding or services and will allow for a more direct provider-to-client relationship. For instance, HenderCare who we currently broker to provide services, could take on CoA clients directly through their own CHSP program.
15. CoA staff managing CHSP currently spend 80- 90% of their time servicing the complex Federal Government grant requirements, leaving little time to focus on meaningful engagement in social and wellbeing opportunities for all older residents in the City.
16. Council's weekly Community Market Bus is the only dedicated social offering through the healthy ageing program, along with some other ad hoc education sessions such as Advance Care planning information sessions, and Community Centre Tai-Chi sessions.
17. If Council were to transition away from delivering the CHSP, staff could dedicate their time to fostering stronger community connections among older residents and work towards developing an engaging program of Positive Ageing activities, through a community development approach.

Proposed New Program Design

18. As part of the new City Community Portfolio, Council will continue its commitment to supporting older people to age positively in the City.
19. In early 2023 the Community Wellbeing team partnered with the COTA SA research arm, 'The Plug-in' to understand the experience of ageing well for City residents aged over 50, and to learn how to maximise the value of existing Council programs. The research was undertaken in two parts; phase one was a survey of 100 respondents and the second phase was a series of workshops to discuss what residents would like Council to provide for residents to age well in the City.
20. The project produced both a Qualitative ([Link 2](#)) and Quantitative ([Link 3](#)) research report with some in-depth insights.
21. Following Council's decision in March 2024, COTA SA's 'The Plug In' were engaged for a second time, to undertake a co-design process that would detail what a new, dynamic social program for older City residents could look like. The full COTA SA Plug In Social Program Co-design Consumer Insights report is provided in **Attachment B**.
22. The co-design process highlighted social connection as an overarching theme of the activities and programs older people are seeking to support them to age well. The following four themes were identified for the proposed program:
 - 22.1. Special Interests: participation in activities that are of personal interest or facilitating ways of trying out new activities.
 - 22.2. Lifelong learning: keep the mind active and challenge thinking.
 - 22.3. Emotional Wellbeing: activities that bring focus to mindset.
 - 22.4. Physical Activities: both structure and unstructured classes.
23. The following table demonstrates the proposed new program and how it responds to the COTA Research findings:

COTA Research Themes	WOW Program Streams
Social Connection	WOW Chats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New coffee catch ups
Physical Wellbeing	WOW Walks/WOW Moves <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New walking groups Tai Chi
Emotional Wellbeing	WOW Mind <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tai Chi Meditation Wellbeing Sessions
Lifelong Learning	WOW Wise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New program of topics of interest
Volunteering	WOW Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded Healthy Ageing Volunteer force
Transport	WOW Bus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued Market Bus Service
Information	WOW Mag <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Older city resident's newsletter with new branding and expanded content

24. Other important recommendations are that activities should be low-cost, offered on various days, at a variety of times, and that transport options should be explored for those with mobility issues.
25. Dedicating Council resources to improving the 'flow of information' about Council-run activities is another key theme and recommendation of this research.
26. A process has been undertaken to map existing activities of Council and across the City that align with the themes of the recommendations of the COTA SA Report and identify gaps where new programming could be trialled. This presents an opportunity to better engage the community with what is currently available to them and program the identified gaps accordingly.
27. The following table outlines what is currently available, and what will be available through the new program, highlighting the expansion of services through this proposed model, with no actual loss of service to the community.

Programs and Services	Description	Current program	New program
WOW Chats	Regular coffee catch ups, multiple city locations (the intention is that these groups may help shape other program streams)	X	✓
WOW Walks/Wow Moves	Walking groups – multiple locations Tai Chi Various exercise classes in community centres and parklands	X	✓
WOW Mind	Program focused on promoting positive mental wellbeing	X	✓
WOW Wise	Special interest topics and lifelong learning program	X	✓
WOW Team	Positive ageing volunteer group ** Expanded as part of new program	✓	✓ ✓
WOW Bus	Weekly market bus	✓	✓
WOW Mag	Bimonthly newsletter (expanded as part of new program)	✓	✓ ✓

CHSP In home Services <i>(delivered by third party service provider)</i>	5 Service Types 132 clients (72 regular)	✓	✓
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Key: X = not offered ✓ = offered ✓✓ = offered and expanded ✓ = offered by non-CoA service providers

28. In considering the feedback from COTA SA’s market research that ‘ageing’ language is not always necessary or desired, the team are proposing a new name for the Positive Ageing Program - WOW Adelaide (Wellbeing. Opportunities. Wisdom) - intended to be inclusive and exciting.
29. Development of a new program creates the opportunity to build a new brand which could be highly valued by CoA residents. The CoA marketing team have developed an initial concept design for the WOW brand, included in **Attachment C**.
30. Currently, CoA produces and distributes a healthy-ageing newsletter (The Grapevine) however the distribution list predominantly comprises CHSP clients and reaches just 3-4% of our residents aged 65 and over.
31. Re-positioning of CoA's services for 65+ will allow this publication to expand and become a valuable resource for the 65+ community.
32. Exact financial implications of this proposed change can only be determined once the program has been fully designed and costed. Initial modelling suggests that staff could deliver the new program with an additional allocation of between \$20,000 and \$30,000. Participant contributions would be collected for certain activities i.e. a charge of \$10 per person to attend Tai Chi (\$5 for pensioners).

Financial Summary

33. The table below represents a financial summary of the previous full financial year (2023/24), the current financial year budget (2024/25) and the budget for the proposed program (2025/26).

	2023/24 (Full Year - Actuals)	2024/25 (Budget)	2025/26 (Proposed Budget)
Income			
Federal Grant	300,054	300,054	0
Co-contributions	36,800	36,800	17,500
Sub-total	336,854	336,854	17,500
Expenses			
Service Delivery	275,489	236,100	35,000
Market Bus	13,500	26,000	26,000
Staff Costs	197,963	197,963	197,963
Program Overheads	20,000	20,840	0
Sub-total	506,952	480,903	258,963
Total	(170,098)	(144,049)	(241,463)

34. Financial results to the end of December 2024 (ie halfway through the 2024/25 financial year) show service delivery costs tracking \$9,000 over budget. It is expected that the end of financial year position for 2024/25 will be a cost to Council of approximately \$165,000.
35. There are no other additional internal costs of supporting the recommendation to transition the role that CoA plays in the delivery of CHSP services.
36. Should Council be successful in obtaining external grant funding from departments such as the Office for Ageing Well, the overall cost to Council will be offset.

Transition and Communications

37. A detailed communications plan has been developed to ensure the CoA supports its existing CHSP clients through a period of service change.
38. The communication and messaging will have a positive focus on providing a smooth transition for the approximately 132 CHSP clients to their new service provider and expanding the offering of positive ageing experiences in the city for a much larger group of residents.

39. Should the recommendations of this report be endorsed, key themes of the communications plan will include:

Client centred approach	Each active CHSP client will be contacted following the Council decision to be informed about the changes and how they will be supported through the process. Further consultation will occur leading up to the transition date to ensure any changes to their service needs are documented and they understand the process for the transition. All CHSP clients will have a personalised transition plan.
Positive Ageing and wellbeing remain Council priority	Clients are aware of the new program themes and proposal, and any alignment with their interests are identified. Clients will be invited to join the mailing list for new program news and are made aware that the Healthy Ageing Coordinator role will remain at Council with a focus on supporting older residents through a community development approach. Positive Ageing will remain a priority for the City Community portfolio.
Information and advocacy service remain	Residents are made aware that the Healthy Ageing Coordinator is available by phone to provide any advice and information throughout the transition phase and will continue to provide referral and information services to the community as an ongoing aspect of the role.
No service loss – just a change of provider	Residents are clear that they are not losing the ability to access any of the CHSP services they have a referral plan to receive. All their CHSP services will continue, they will just be provided through a different organisation.
New community programming to complement in home service providers	This change will enable CoA to complement the existing service environment by adding greater value in the form of social and wellbeing programming. Community programming is an important service that Local Government are well placed to facilitate, rather than providing intermediary in home services, where many alternative providers already exist in the market.
Internal and external stakeholders can advocate and inform	The communications strategy will include plans to communicate clear facts with both internal and external stakeholders of Council, who regularly interact with CHSP clientele and ensure these stakeholders can also keep clients informed and help connect them to the right supports through this transition phase.
Evaluation	An evaluation survey will be designed to assess the transition process, as well as the program implementation and participation.
Positive community messaging	Utilise social media to share good news stories about the changes and opportunities, as well as promotion in the lead up to the new WOW program launch and celebrating new program outcomes, stories and achievements.

40. Any organisation seeking to discontinue their role as a CHSP provider is required to prepare and submit a 'Transition Out Plan' to the Department of Health and Aged Care.
41. A draft Transition Out Plan has been developed to detail the CoA's plan to ensure continuity of service delivery as it withdraws from providing CHSP services. This includes details of:
- 41.1. Provider Readiness – what actions the CoA has already taken in preparing to exit from CHSP services.
 - 41.2. Current CHSP Delivery Profile – a summary of the CoA's CHSP service model, which may be provided to potential new provider/s to gain an understanding of delivery requirements and determine their capacity to deliver continuity of service for transferring clients.
 - 41.3. Timeframe and activities for transition and associated communications – to advise clients, their carers and other stakeholders of service changes. This information will be provided in a timely manner to ease any concerns for clients and their families.
 - 41.4. Notification to the Department of Health and Aged Care regarding request to terminate, including proposed transition date.

- 41.5. Proposed communications with other service providers, networks, and other agencies to inform of changes as required.
- 41.6. Proposed communications within the CoA.
- 41.7. Plans for the closure of Aged Care Portal availability and management of any clients on a waitlist.
- 41.8. Handover arrangements to ensure service continuity for all existing clients during this period.
- 41.9. Post transition administrative tasks to manage the final closure of services, ensuring outputs and funding data are included in Federal Grant funding agreements.
- 41.10. Post transition forwarding arrangements.

Next Steps

42. Should this proposal be supported by Council, the following steps will be taken:
 - 42.1. Healthy Ageing Coordinator to finalise Transition Out Plan documentation as required by Federal Government funding guidelines.
 - 42.2. The Chief Executive Officer or delegate to advise the Federal Government funding body that Council will commence the transition out of the delivery of CHSP services, with a recommended date to cease services of 30 June 2025.
 - 42.3. The Healthy Ageing Coordinator will use the Transition Out Plan to work with clients and their respective new providers to ensure a smooth transition period and process for ceasing delivery of CHSP services.
 - 42.4. Healthy Ageing Coordinator to work with marketing to firm up the new Positive Ageing in the City (WOW) brand and communication strategy to improve the flow of information and grow the resident database.
 - 42.5. Official launch of the new Positive Ageing (WOW) program in July 2025.

DATA AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Link 1 – Report ‘City of Adelaide Commonwealth Home Support Program’ from 5 March 2024 City Community Services and Culture Committee

Link 2 – The Plug-in – City of Adelaide Full Interim Quantitative Report – Positive Ageing in the City

Link 3 – The Plug-in – City of Adelaide Qualitative workshop report – Positive Ageing in the City

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Discussion Paper Commonwealth Home Support Program Analysis and Future Direction

Attachment B – The Plug-in Social Program Co-Design Consumer Insights Report

Attachment C – WOW (Wellness. Opportunities. Wisdom) – Initial Brand Concept Design

- END OF REPORT -